

SPARKS OF EMUNAH



HEICHAL HAKODESH BRESLEV WEEKLY NEWSLETTER
BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF MOHOROSH ZT”L
GIVEN OVER BY THE ROSH YESHIVA SHLT”A

PARSHAS BECHUKOSAI
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CHIZUK from the PARSHA

TZEDAKA – IT’S NOT JUST MONEY

וְאִם מִדָּה הוּא מְעַרְבָּךְ, וְהֶעֱמִידוּ לְפָנֵי הַכֹּהֵן, וְהֶעֱרִיף אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֵן, עַל פִּי אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁיג יָד הַנֹּדֵד יַעֲרִיכֵנוּ הַכֹּהֵן

If he is too poor to pay the full amount, he shall be brought before the kohen, who will assess how much he can afford to pay.

It’s a tight economy today. Anyone in finances will tell you that we live in difficult times. Some people have lost major investments; others simply can’t afford to spend as much as they are accustomed to. Many struggle just to make it through the month; some even have to beg for a loaf of bread.

Living with less can be challenging, yet there is a kind of poverty that’s much worse than financial instability. The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 1:106*) that he who is impoverished in mind is the most unfortunate of all.

In order to make it through the trials of life, we need to have rock-solid *emunah*. The all-encompassing belief that Hashem is in control is the only thing that can keep us strong even when life seems to be so harsh, so unfair. What happens to a person when he faces a challenge and his *emunah* is not developed enough? What if his troubles are so great that he doesn’t have the presence of mind to strengthen himself?

This, the Rebbe says, is the most extreme form of poverty. The greatest *mitzva* is to give a person like this “*tzedaka*” – i.e. *chizuk* to persevere through his difficulties. Remind him that Hashem will help. Encourage him not to give up. Reassure him that the hard times will pass and it will soon be good.

When you give money to a poor man, how much could your few dollars help him? Perhaps he’ll be able to buy food for his family, or maybe pay rent for another month, but the cash will soon run out and he’ll have to collect *tzedaka* again. However, **when you give *chizuk* to another, it can change his life forever!** More valuable than the largest donation is a word of encouragement. Go distribute “*tzedaka*” – spread hope; spread positivity!

Yet the obvious question arises: One can only give *tzedaka* if he has money to give. How can a person be *mechazek* others if he is also dispirited and in desperate need of encouragement?

The solution to this lies in this week’s *parsha*: מְעַרְבָּךְ – וְאִם מִדָּה הוּא – If a person is “poor” – he is disheartened and thinks he is worthless, לְפָנֵי הַכֹּהֵן – **he must be brought to the *tzaddik*.** וְהֶעֱרִיף אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֵן, עַל פִּי אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁיג יָד הַנֹּדֵד יַעֲרִיכֵנוּ הַכֹּהֵן – The *tzaddik* will find the good in him and remind him of how valuable he is; this encouragement will give him strength to continue despite his hardships, and enable him to give *chizuk*, as well.

This is why we need to have a connection to *tzaddikim* – with the guidance of a *tzaddik*, we can help ourselves and help others. *Tzaddikim* reveal the enormous *kochos* that lie dormant inside us. They teach us how to remain strong and strengthen others, no matter what hardships we endure.



MOHOROSH SPEAKS GETTING ALONG

“ The *yom tov* of Shavuot is a little more than a week away. Every *yom tov* is special, yet Shavuot is the core of Yiddishkeit; the day we accept the Torah is what makes us Yidden.

Chazal teach us that דרך תורה קדמה לתורה – *middos* are a prerequisite to accepting the Torah. Each year, the 49 days leading up to *matan Torah* are days of introspection and self-improvement, especially in the area of *bein adam lachaveiro*.

Emunah, Emunah, Emunah

When dealing with people, conflict is all too common, yet it doesn’t have to be so. The root of all interpersonal issues is a lack of *emunah*. When it is crystal-clear in our minds that Hashem runs the world and that nobody can help or harm us, we don’t get upset at others; rather, we channel our challenges into *tefilla* and ask Hashem for

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Dear ...

I received your letter.

What can be a better life insurance than the holy Torah? Chazal state (*Kiddushin 82*), "R' Nehorai said, 'I put aside every profession and I teach my son only Torah, for a man enjoys some of its reward in this world while its principal remains for him in the World to Come. The other trades are not so; when a man becomes sick, old or afflicted and can no longer work, he dies of starvation. But Torah is different; it guards him from all evil in his youth and provides him with hope in his old age.'"

Beware of swindlers who try to rob you of your money. Don't be fooled by their smooth tongues or enticing offers. **Buying life insurance does not reflect a lack of *emunah*, but rather a lack of *seichel***; it isn't necessary or helpful. Shlomo Hamelech says (*Mishlei 14:26*), that a person's good deeds provide protection for his children. Therefore, if you would like to ensure a good life for yourself and for your future generations, invest in learning *perakim* Mishnayos and *dafim* Gemara instead.

The best insurance for longevity is being *ma'avir sedra* every week, as Chazal say (*Brochos 8b*), "A person should be *ma'avir sedra* every week, reviewing the *Chumash* twice and the *Targum* once. In this merit, he will have a long and blessed life."

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #2, page 129



whatever we need. Without *emunah*, every incident throws us off-balance.

Shmuel noticed that his friend Chaim recently splurged on a new, luxurious SUV. Unable to contain his jealousy – he was in desperate need of a car, too – he muttered, "Spoiled!"

Avromy snorted as Yaakov told him about a major auction he had organized single-handedly. In truth, he was secretly impressed. "Why can't I ever pull off something like that?" He berated himself.

Chazal say (*Yuma 38b*) that no one can touch anything that was destined for another; Hashem is the only One Who gives and the only One Who takes. Financial security, good looks or talent that we see in others were given to them directly by Hashem. Instead of eating ourselves up and suppressing thoughts of inferiority by knocking those around us, we must work on strengthening our belief in Hashem.

Talking to Hashem solidifies our *emunah*. By taking time every day to "have a conversation" with Hashem – as if He is your closest friend – you will feel His presence at every turn and discover inner contentment, and then it will be so much easier to live in peace with others.



Judging Others, Judging Yourself

The courtroom is packed. It's a tough trial; the defendant is facing stiff charges. The prosecution stands on one side of the room, with a lineup of witnesses behind him. The attorney for the defendant has his own staff on the other side of the room. Who will win the case? All the assembled turn to the defendant.

This is the scene in the Supreme Court – in Heaven. The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 113*) that before a heavenly verdict is passed, the person being judged is asked if he agrees with his sentence. However, if we would be asked point-blank if we should be punished, we'd surely object, since nobody can view his own case objectively. Therefore, we are put into situations that trigger the "judge" inside us. We watch others act improperly and we're quick to "sentence" them:

"How dare he! He doesn't deserve so much money."

"What rotten middos! Nobody will want to marry him."

"She can't raise a family normally. They should take her children away!"

Unbeknownst to you, your case is being tried in *shamayim* as you speak, and they are waiting to hear whether you agree with the outcome. Think you're judging another? You're really sentencing yourself to be punished for a similar offense you've committed.

This is the meaning of the *mishna* (*Avos 3*), ונפרעין מן האדם מדעתו, ושלא מדעתו. When a person is punished, it is *מדעתו* – with his



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consent, because he agreed to the sentence. Yet it is also שלא מדעתו – without his consent, because he had no idea that he was really judging himself.

If we can find it in ourselves to overlook others' misdeeds and be *dan l'kaf zechus*, we can spare ourselves much heartache. Chazal say (*Shabbos 127*), הדין את הבריות לכף זכות – when we judge others favorably, our case is also judged favorably, and the punishments we deserve can be avoided.

To Build a Yid

About 250 years ago, the rabbanim issued a strict ruling against using kabbalah to cause supernatural events, due to the spiritual danger involved. It soon became known that a man named R' Mendel had disobeyed the gedolim and used the powers of kabbalah for his own purposes.

The people of the town hurried to report R' Mendel's misdeeds to the rav, who declared that the offense necessitated severe punishment. As per the rav's instructions, the townspeople wrapped R' Mendel in a cloth and publicly beat him and degraded him.

Humiliated and broken, R' Mendel fell into a deep depression and lay in bed for weeks on end, bitter and listless. His family tried to get him out of it but he refused to be consoled. They ran to every tzaddik in the country, desperate to heal him, but nothing helped.

Eventually they came to the holy Rebbe, R' Nachman of Breslev. When they recounted the horrific story, he exclaimed, **"Is it a talent to break a Yid? No – it's a talent to build a Yid!"**

The Rebbe spoke with R' Mendel at length, giving him *chizuk* and encouragement (and gently told him not to use kabbalah anymore). Slowly, R' Mendel came out of his depression and soon regained his former vitality.

This is the power of caring, of kind words and reassurance. It's easy to hurt, deject and discourage. Talent is to encourage, talent is to build.

These weeks leading up to Shavuos and *kabbalas haTorah* are for working on relationships. In this time, let's aim to avoid conflict and instead focus on the good in others, spreading positivity wherever we go. In this merit, Hashem will look for the good in us, and we will be successful in everything we do.



childhood. This trial gives you the opportunity to strengthen each other. The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 1:106*) that when a person gives *chizuk* to another,

he, too is strengthened. Comfort your wife and you will benefit twice: if she is uplifted you will only benefit, and even if your words don't seem to have any effect on her, they will strengthen you. As the Rebbe teaches us (*Likutei Moharan 1:184*), "Giving *chizuk* creates a flash of light. At times it's a 'direct ray' and the recipient accepts the encouragement; at other times, it's an 'indirect ray' – even if the person can't accept the *chizuk*, it returns to the original person and is *mechazek* him."

My dear brother, after following the Rebbe's *sefer derech halimud* so diligently – and especially since you merited to finish *Shas, Shulchan Aruch, Zohar* etc. – heed the Rebbe's *eitza* of *shikcha* with the same sincerity. Forget your past and begin anew; start treating your wife with respect and speak to her kindly. By doing so, you will have the strength to raise your children to be righteous Yidden.

Taste the sweetness of *hisbodedus* – it's a priceless gift from our holy Rebbe. Find a quiet corner where you will not be disturbed and unburden yourself to Hashem. Talk to Him in your mother tongue and tell Him everything that is on your mind. Try it! Say, **"Ribbono Shel Olam! What can I do that the yetzer hara prevails over me again and again? As many times as I resolve to start anew, he manages to spoil it all. I argue with my wife and get angry with my children, and I sometimes even hit them. Hashem, please help me control myself and help me restore peace in my home."**

I hope that you will read this letter many times and try to carry out everything that I wrote here. If you take my advice and turn your life around, you will benefit in this world and the next; if you don't, you will ultimately lose everything dear to you. Remember that it's forbidden to hit children – it doesn't accomplish anything and only makes matters worse. Hitting children distances them and causes the entire family to fall apart, *R"l*.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

WHY DOESN'T TORAH LEARNING CURE MY TEMPER?



Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva *shlita*,

Thank you so much for the *shiurim* and *chizuk*; I have been listening for more than a year now and my life has been transformed. I was *zoche* to complete the entire

Shas recently, only because I started learning consistently with the Rebbe's *sefer derech halimud*. I learn *Chumash, Nach, Mishnayos, a daf of Bavli, Yerushalmi* and *Tosefta, Shulchan Aruch, Zohar, Midrash* and *Likutei Moharan* each day.



The Rosh Yeshiva has said on many occasions that a person's entire character changes when he learns Torah, and that he will gain peace of mind and become a patient person. However, it doesn't seem to work for me. I try to follow the Rosh Yeshiva's guidance and control myself, but I find it very difficult. I still don't have patience for my wife and children; I argue with my wife often and I get angry at my children and even hit them.

I have also heard the Rosh Yeshiva say that when a child is constantly belittled by his parents or teachers, it will negatively affect his *shalom bayis* later on. My wife and I were constantly put down as children – is it possible for us to have *shalom bayis*?

I would appreciate if the Rosh Yeshiva can help me out in these three areas: encouragement to continue with the *sefer derech halimud, chizuk* for *shalom bayis*, and advice on how to have patience with my children.

Thank you for everything.

The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...

I received your letter.

Be strong and do not despair. With the Rebbe's *eitzos*, it's possible to escape from all problems.

First of all, internalize the concept of *shikcha* – forgetfulness. The Rebbe says (*Sichos Haran 26*), "The world views forgetfulness as a flaw, but I consider it a virtue. If a person would always remember everything he did, he

would be plagued by thoughts of past misdeeds and unable to serve Hashem."

Listen to the Rebbe and give yourself a fresh start; don't let thoughts of your past hinder your success and happiness. Thank Hashem that you merited a wife and children and focus on how you can make amends and rebuild.

You write that both you and your wife suffered a painful

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